

*Holy Zeal against Sin,*

S H E W N

To be an Acceptable  
And Seasonable Duty :

I N A

S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

At Lyme Regis,

I N T H E

County of D O R S E T,

Sept. 4th. 1700.

At a Quarterly Lecture appointed for the  
promoting the *Reformation of Manners.*

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By J. E. Minister of the Gospel.

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Gal. 4. 8. *It is good to be zealously affected  
always in a good thing.*

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L O N D O N,

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( 1 )  
Num. XXV. 12, 13. part.

-----Behold, I give unto him my Covenant  
Peace; and he shall have it, and his  
after him, even the Covenant of an e-  
sting Priesthood; because he was ze-  
for his God.

**I**T is the observation of wise men, that  
Age has some special duty belonging  
For the most part, every Age brings with  
new turn of affairs; and hence arise new D  
I shall not go back to the days of old, and en-  
what was the special duty of our Forefath-  
their time: let it suffice to tell you, that the  
sent duty of this generation, and which God  
his Providence calls us to, seems to be the *Re-  
tion of Manners.*

You need not be informed, that vice is g-  
rampant; that prophaness and immorality  
overrun our Land; that swearing and sab-  
breaking, drunkenness and whoredom do  
much abound, and walk in our Streets in som-  
ces at noon-day: it is too evident to be unobse-  
So that we stand in great need of a *Reformatio*

And we have a very fair opportunity for it  
command and countenance, both of *King*  
*Parliament.*

We have been told, that in general Refor-  
ons, we should wait the Magistrates motion  
concurrence. I will not dispute that now,  
ther it be universally true? It is sufficient, th-  
will answer the present case; we have the  
premi Magistrate's concurrence in this matte-

the Honourable House of Commons, the great  
representative body of the Nation, have made a  
pious Address to his Majesty, desiring him  
to put out his Royal Proclamation, commanding all  
Justices of the Peace, and other Magistrates,  
to see in speedy execution, those good Laws that are  
in force, against Prophaness and Immorality;  
to give due encouragement to all such as do  
duty therein.

And accordingly the King, (Our Gracious  
Sovereign, whom God long preserve!) has issued  
his Proclamation, wherein he strictly char-  
geth all persons, Judges, Mayors, Justices of the  
Peace, and all other Officers and Ministers, both  
ecclesiastical and Civil, and all other his Subjects,  
in what it may concern, to be very vigilant and strict  
in the discovery and prosecution of all persons, who  
shall be guilty of Excessive drinking, Blasphemy,  
Swearing and Cursing, Lewdness, Prophan-  
ness of the Lord's day, or other dissolute, immoral  
and disorderly practices, as they will answer it to  
the Almighty God, and upon pain of the King's highest  
 displeasure.

So that now we have a loud call in the pro-  
vidence of God to apply our selves to this work  
of Reformation. Now is a time for the Pious  
to be Sober, for all that are on God's side, to shew  
their Zeal against Vice, to shew themselves Zealous  
for their God.

That I might encourage so good a work, and  
note the Reformation already begun in many  
parts of this Kingdom, I thought it not amiss,  
to propose to your consideration the above Text.  
Which shews how acceptable to Almighty God  
the Zeal of Phinehas was, in executing judgment



on *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, two debauched persons. tells him, that as a reward of his Zeal, he sh<sup>d</sup> have confirm'd to him an everlasting Priesthood. *Behold I give unto him my Covenant of Peace, &*

That you may see the Occasion and Scope of these words, I shall give you, in brief, the history of the matter. The *Israelites* being come to their wilderness march to the plains of *Moab*. *Balak* King of *Moab* sent to *Balaam*, ( a notorious Soothsayer in those parts,) to come and curse the *Israelites*. But *Balaam* being able to do nothing against *Israel* with all his Enchantments, whilst *Israel* was faithful unto his God, whilst God *beheld no iniquity in Jacob*, as *Balaam* expresseth it, *Num. 23. 21*. This wicked Prophet therefore advised *Balaam* to ensnare them into Sin; well knowing that sin would provoke the displeasure of the Almighty against them, who was their protection, and so would make them fall an easy prey unto their Enemies.

By the way note; *That nothing tends more to rob a people or nation of its strength and glory, than to expose them to contempt and ruine, than Sin.* Therefore those, that are Zealous in the work of Reformation, are some of the Nation's best friends. It is the Interest of Princes to encourage such persons. It is some of the best state-policy in the world, to give check to growing Impiety, and to encourage the Vertuous. For *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a reproach unto any people.* *Prov. 20. 14, 34.* This was the Observation of *Solomon*, the wisest of Men, and the greatest of Kings. But this by the bye.

*Balaam*, that crafty Diviner and Prophet, was well skill'd in these Politicks. And therefore *Moses* takes notice of it, *Num. 31. 15, 16.* he

*Balak* to insnare *Israel* by their Women. And were insnared; first to Whoredom, and to Idolatry, as you read in the two first Verses of the Chapter of my Text. *Num.* 25. 1, 2. And *abode in Shittim, and the people begun to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab. And they drew the people unto the Sacrifices of their Gods: where the people did eat, and bowed down to their Gods.* Now God was so displeased with these abominable practices, that he sent a destructive plague against them, which swept away many thousands of them. And he commanded *Moses* to execute judgment upon the transgressors, v. 3, 4. *Moses*, having received this commandment from the Lord, gave order to the Judges, (the men that were chosen to assist him in the Government,) to slay every one his men, (those under charge,) as many of them as were guilty, v. 5. Now in the interim, before this command was put in Execution, comes one of the *Israelites* named *Zimri*, and brings unto his Brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of *Moses* and the Congregation. So bold and impudent was he in his sin, v. 6. Whereupon *Phinehas*, in a holy Zeal, takes a javelin in his hand, goes to their Tent, and thrusts him both through, the Man of *Israel* and the woman through her belly, and so the plague was stopped, v. 7, 8.

Whether *Phinehas* did this in the person of a Magistrate, and as one of those Judges that were ordered by *Moses* to slay these transgressors, v. 5. whether he did as a Private person, being moved thereto by some Special direction and motion of God's spirit, and so there was something extraordinary in the action? It is not material at present

to determine. For either way it is no warrant for private persons, in ordinary cases, to take upon them the Execution of Justice.

That which at present I would note to you *Phinehas* his zeal and fervour against Sin, which manifested by that action. Which zeal of *Phinehas* was so pleasing to God, that he testified his high approbation of it, not only by removing the plague, (as before noted ;) but by bestowing on *Phinehas* an everlasting Priesthood, as a reward for it. An account whereof we have in my Text *Behold, I give unto him my Covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the Covenant of an everlasting Priesthood ; because he was zealous for his God.*

The Observation I shall note to you from the words is this ;

Doct. *That it is a duty very pleasing unto God when persons in a time of general corruption do shew themselves zealous for God.*

It was a time of general corruption among the *Israelites*, and *Phinehas* shewed a more than ordinary zeal in suppressing of it, and God manifested his high approbation of *Phinehas* his zeal by bestowing on him an everlasting Priesthood.

In prosecuting this point I shall,

(1.) Shew what it imports to be zealous for God.

(2.) Prove that 'tis a duty very pleasing unto God.

(3.) Shew who be the persons that should exercise this zeal. And,

(4.) Conclude with some Improvement.

First, I shall shew, what it is to be zealous for God. That we may rightly apprehend the meaning

this phrase, it may not be amiss to speak something to the nature of Zeal in the general; and then more particularly to shew the Import of the phrase in my Text.

As for Zeal in the general, it denotes the warmth and fervour of Spirit. *Zelare & Zelari*, saith *Vossius*,) *utrumque dicitur de ardenti affectu, inc pro aliquo, nunc contra aliquem.* i.e. To have zeal, or to be zealous are both spoken of any ardent affection, sometimes for a person, sometimes against him. The Greek word ζῆλος (quod à ζῆλον, valde ferveo,) signifies *boiling*, or *fervent and burning heat*. For as boiling or burning is the highest degree of heat, so is zeal or fervency the highest pitch of our affections. And therefore Zeal is described by some, to be *the heat and intention of all the affections*. It is not so much a vertue in itself, as the life and soul of all other vertues. It is like varnish to the Colour, which is in it self no colour, but gives a gloss and lustre unto all.

Zeal in it self is neither good nor evil; but according to its object: accordingly there is a good and bad zeal.

(1.) There is a *bad Zeal*. Of this kind is that which is set on wrong objects. This scarce deserves the name of zeal, being nothing else but an Intemperate heat, or rather a kind of Frenzy or Madnes. Such was the zeal of those Idolaters, who in their false worship cut themselves with knives, 1 *King.* 18. 28. Such was the zeal of those Jews, who burnt their children in the fire unto Moloch, *Jer.* 7. 31. And with this violent and bad zeal was St. Paul acted before his conversion, as himself confesseth, *Act.* 26. 11. *Phil.* 3. 6. compared,) when he was so enraged against the Christians



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stians, that he spared no cost or pains, to suppress their meetings and to root them out. This is the zeal whereof my Text speaks.

(2.) There is a *good zeal*, which may be thus described; *It is a holy warmth and fervour of affection, wrought in us by the spirit of God; whereby we are inclined to promote God's glory, in a vigorous manner, according to his word.*

The marks and properties of this zeal, among other, are these.

(1.) *It is always about a good thing, Gal. 4.* It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing. If the matter be evil, the more vigorous and earnest any person is, the more sinful. Hence zeal is always exercised about a good matter.

(2.) *It is always accompanied with knowledge, Rom, 10. 2.* For I bear them record, that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. This was the fault of the Israelites zeal: it wanted knowledge, zeal without knowledge is but a blind zeal.

(3.) *It maketh the greatest account of the weightier matter.* This rule we have, *Mat. 23. 23.* where Christ blames the Scribes and Pharisees, for showing great zeal about lesser matters, but having no concern for those that were weightier, speaking to them after this manner. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees Hypocrites for ye pay Tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; this ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone.* First our zeal should be carried forth to weightier matters, than to those of less moment.

From what hath been spoken of Zeal in the general, we may easily apprehend what it is to be *zealous for God.* It is to have this true zeal, that



have been describing. But more particularly  
phrase may denote these two things.

1.) A being zealous for God in his Service. And,

2.) A being zealous for God against Sin.

Then are we zealous *for God in his Service*, when  
carefully perform all religious duties, private  
publick. When we dare not omit them, di-  
tly attend them, and are devout in them; ser-  
g the Lord *with fervency of spirit*, as the expres-  
is, *Ro. 12. 11.*

Then we are zealous *for God against Sin*, when  
do not only dislike it in our selves, and care-  
y endeavour to abstain from it; but also when  
*cannot bear with it* in others, as the phrase is,  
v. 2. 3.

Tis this latter is the zeal, of which my Text  
aks, for which *Phinehas* is commended, and  
s rewarded of God. He had a *zeal for God a-*  
*gainst Sin*. Which zeal for God includes in it  
se three things.

(1.) *A tender respect to God's glory.* This is the  
bund of all true zeal. 'Twas this made *Phine-*  
so zealous for his God, because he had a ten-  
regard to God's glory. This was the fault of  
his zeal, and for which he is blamed; because  
had not so pure an eye to God's glory, as he  
ght to have. *Come see my zeal* (said he) *for*  
*Lord*, 2 *Kin. 10. 16.* *Jehu* was zealous preten-  
dly for God: but self was at the bottom; it  
s for a Kingdom. True Godly zeal hath always  
eye to God's glory; this is a principal ingredi-  
t in it. So in the above description of zeal;  
*a holy warmth, whereby we are inclined to pro-*  
*te God's glory, &c.* The Glory of God is the  
eat end of our being. We are commanded to  
refres

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respect this in all that we do, 1 Cor. 10. 31. It is the butt and scope of all regular and holy actions: and therefore of necessity must be included in holy zeal.

(2.) *A holy indignation against Sin.* Sin does in effect dethrone God. The practical language of the Sinner is; who is the Lord, that I should obey him? It bids defiance to all God's Attributes. It opposeth his Sovereignty, it slighteth his Omniscience, it contemneth his Power, it despiseth his Goodness, it is a direct opposition to his Holiness: in a word, it strikes at the very life and being of God; so horrid and abominable is the nature of Sin. And was it in the Sinner's power, as it is in his will, *Psal.* 14. 1. there should be no God to punish him for his sin. Now this being the nature and tendency of Sin; who, that hath any concern for God's glory, who that hath any true zeal for God, can chuse but have an abhorrence of it? By Sin God's glory is eclipsed and sullied; his very being and government are opposed and slighted: those persons therefore, that are zealous for God, must needs have a holy indignation against Sin.

(3.) It imports *a diligent endeavour to suppress Sin.* Activity and Zeal go always together. The active Christian and the zealous Christian are never separated. Zeal in Scripture is opposed to laziness, indifferency, *lukewarmness*, *Rev.* 3. 16, 20. It is of the nature of Zeal to be fervent, and to make persons vigorous and active, wherever it is. *John*, being zealous, was very active in his way. And so was *Phinehas*, the Instance of my Text; he was very active in suppressing vice, and executing judgment upon the Sinners. And where there is

true zeal for God against Sin, it will make persons in their respective places, to appear against it, and endeavour to suppress it.

This briefly for the first general ; what it is to be *zealous for God*, and what it imports. I come,

Secondly, to prove, *that it is a duty very pleasing unto God.*

That it is a *duty*, is plain from Scripture, Precept and Precedent : both lay an obligation on us to be *zealous for God*.

(1.) *Scripture-Precept.* Unless we break God's bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us, and so act like those wicked ones, *Psal. 2. 3.* we must resolve to comply with this duty, because by Precept we are enjoined to be *zealous for God against Sin*. The Scripture requires us, *to be zealously affected in a good thing, Gal. 4. 18.* And what better thing can a person be employed in, than in endeavouring to suppress vice, whereby God is dishonoured in the world? Without complying with this duty we cannot answer one great end of Christ's Redemption, *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14.* It is one end of Christ's Redemption, that we might be zealous of good works : and among good works, this of *Reformation*, the reformation of Sinners is none of the least.

It is a foul blot in *Laodicea's* character, that she had no heart to restrain evil-doers. 'Tis mentioned to the praise of the Church of *Ephesus*, that she could not bear with them that were evil, *Rev. 2.* But as for *Laodicea*, she was lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, very indifferent as to this matter, and therefore God threatens to spue her out of his

outh, Rev. 3. 15, 16. and to prevent this judgment calls on her to be *zealous and repent*, v. 19. therefore God's call, his command and injunction have any weight with us, it is our duty to renew our selves zealous against sin. We are obliged hereto by *Precept*.

(2.) *Scripture-Precedent does oblige to it.* We are bid to follow the *footsteps of the flock*, Can. 1.8. and to be *followers of the Saints*, wherein they are followers of God, Phil. 3. 17. Eph. 5. 1. Now 'tis recorded to the everlasting praise and commendation of the Saints, many of them, how eminently zealous they were in their days for God against vice. This was the commendation of *David*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah*, and *Josiah*, Kings of Judah, that they set themselves against vice, and zealously promoted a Reformation. This was that, which good *Nehemiah* took such comfort in, when he had been reforming and cleansing the people, and manifesting his zeal against the profanation of the Sabbath, said he, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy*, Neh. 13. 15, 22. *Elijah* also pleaded his zeal before God, 1 Kin. 19. 10, 14. *I have been very jealous (or zealous) for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant, &c.* And to mention no more, it was this that made *Phinehas* so famous to posterity, and gained him the Covenant of an everlasting Priesthood, *because he was zealous for his God*; because he appeared boldly for God against sin, and executed judgment on those presumptuous sinners *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, without having respect to their quality and greatness, notwithstanding *Zimri* was Son of a Prince, and *Cosbi* was the Daughter



of a chief House in *Midian*, Num. 25. 8, 14,

Thus if we look back to the Saints of old, we find many instances recorded in Scripture, of persons zealous for God against vice. It is therefore our duty to be so too; that we may be like the people of God, in old time.

That it is a duty very pleasing unto God, may be demonstrated from divers particulars: but at present I shall keep to the instance of my Text, and thence make it appear to be an acceptable duty. That *Phinehas* his zeal was very pleasing unto God will evidently appear from the consideration of these two particulars, both mentioned in the Text and Context. One is, God's removing the Plague from the *Israelites* thereupon. The other is his bestowing an everlasting Priesthood on *Phinehas*.

(1.) *God's removing the Plague from the Israelites* upon *Phinehas* his performing this duty, is a plain indication how acceptable his zeal was unto God. The *Israelites* having greatly corrupted themselves by whoredom and idolatry, God sent among them a sweeping Plague, which took away not less than *twenty four thousand*, Num. 25. 9.

Times of general debauchery are usually the forerunners of some fore judgment. Whatever pretences men make to Loyalty, to the Temple of the Lord, to the Church, and the like; yet if they are debauched persons, they are some of the Nation's worst enemies. These were the persons that brought wrath upon *Israel*, and caused God to send the Plague among them.

Now when God's judgments are abroad in the earth, the Inhabitants thereof should learn Righteousness. It should be so: but what shall we say? The wicked will do wickedly still. Mercies



Judgments, they are all one to them; they were reclaimed. Thus 'tis in our days, and 'twas in the days of old. An instance whereof have in *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, who notwithstanding that dreadful judgment God sent on the people for their great wickedness, went on still boldly the same debauched practices, not being afraid to commit lewdness in the face of the Sun. But *Phinehas* on the other hand was no less bold in God's cause, in executing judgment: for in a holy zeal he went forthwith to them, and thrust them both through. Which action of his was so pleasing to God, that hereupon he stayed the Plague, *And he went to the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust them both through, the man of Israel and the woman through her belly, and the plague was stayed.* And if any should doubt, whether 'twas on the account of *Phinehas* his zeal, that the Plague was stayed, 'tis farther added, *v. 10, 11. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the Son of Eleazar, the Son of Aaron the Priest, hath turned away my wrath from the Children of Israel (whilst he was zealous for my sake among them) that I consumed not the Children of Israel in my jealousy.*

(2.) God's bestowing an everlasting Priesthood on *Phinehas*, as a reward of his zeal, is another manifest indication of his being greatly well pleased with it. This evidence we have in the words of my Text; *Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, &c. (Behold,)* God calls upon others to take notice of it, for their encouragement. For God will reward others, as well as *Phinehas*, if they shew themselves zealous in his Cause. (*Behold, I give unto him my Covenant of Peace,*) i. e. the Covenant of Priesthood, as it is expressed, *v. 13. c.*

here the Covenant of Peace; partly with respect to the happy effect of this heroical action of whereby he made peace between God and the people; but chiefly in regard to the principal end and use of the Priestly Office, which was to mediate between God and Men, and to make atonement offering up Sacrifice, Incense and Prayers. *and he shall have it.*) His zeal was so pleasing to mighty God, that he doubles the promise, to give him the greater assurance of it. *(And his reward after him.)* The promised blessing, the reward of his zeal, extends likewise unto his posterity. God sometimes visiteth the sins of Parents upon their Children; so he oftentimes blesteth the seed of the righteous for the Parents sake. *Phinehas* his zeal brought a blessing on his Children. *(Even the Covenant of an Everlasting Priesthood.)* The word *Everlasting*, in the Old Testament does usually signify, *'till Christ's coming*. And so the support of the promise is this; that if *Phinehas* his posterity did not forfeit it by some remarkable sin, they should have the Priesthood continued to them as long as the Law and Commonwealth of the *Jews* lasted; *i. e.* till the coming of the *Messiah*, at which time the *Aaronical* Priesthood was to give place to that of *Christ*, Heb. 7. 11. *(Because he was zealous for his God.)* Here's the reason of all rendered, why God shewed such favour to *Phinehas*, because he appeared boldly for God against sin. So that 'tis evident from that reward, which was annexed to *Phinehas* his zeal, that God was highly well pleased with it.

And hence we may gather, that to be zealous for God at any time, is also a duty well-pleasing to the Almighty; because the reason of the duty is the

same still, the same now as it was then : *Et milibus idem est judicium*, of like things we pass a like judgment. I come,

Thirdly, to shew, *Who be the persons that sh exercise this zeal.*

Whether *Phinehas* in that action of execution judgment may be considered as a *Magistrate*, (some think) or as a *Priest*, or *Private person* matters not; for it is the duty of all persons in their respective places, whether *Magistrates*, *Ministers*, or *private Christians*, to shew themselves zealous for God against sin.

(1.) *Magistrates* ought to be zealous for God to this particular. These have not only the common obligations of all *Christians*, but some peculiar bonds and ties, whereby they are obliged to this duty above others.

It is one great end of the *Magistrate's Office*, to be a terrour to evil-doers, and to execute wrath on them that do evil; and this by the appointment and constitution of God; *Ro. 13. 3, 4. For Rulers are not a terrour to good works, but to the evil; if thou then do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the Minister of God to thee for good. If thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger, to execute wrath on him that doth evil.* *Magistrates* are God's *Ministers*; of his appointment. And they bear not the *Sword* in vain; the meaning is, they should not do it. 'Tis common in *Scripture*, to speak of things as already done, that ought to be done. Because every person in the judgment of charity, unless some weight appears to the contrary, is supposed to act acc

g to his duty. But if Magistrates bear with evil-  
 rs, and suffer vice to go unpunished, they do  
 great measure bear the Sword in vain, and so  
 not answer the end of their Office, the great  
 ign whereof is, to restrain vice and disorder,  
 to punish evil-doers.

Besides, Magistrates are under the peculiar tye  
 a sacred Oath, whereby they oblige themselves  
 be faithfull to that trust committed to their  
 charge; and *in all articles of the King's Commission*  
*them directed, to do legal right to the poor and to*  
*rich, after their cunning wit and power, accord-*  
*to the known Laws and Statutes of the Realm.*  
 and consequently by oath they are obliged to pu-  
 sh offenders, without respect of persons; and  
 put the Laws in execution against vice, when  
 e informations are brought to them. If they  
 of performing their duty in this respect, they  
 e in danger of incurring the guilt of perjury.

Furthermore, Magistrates are the *Representatives*  
*God.* And accordingly in Scripture they are  
 gnified with his Name, *Psal. 82. 6. I have said ye*  
*Gods, and all of you the children of the most high.*  
 and therefore considering whose Representatives  
 d Vicegerents they are, they should shew a zeal  
 ainst vice, because nothing is so abominable to  
 e holy God as sin is. The Scripture tells us,  
*is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,* Hab. 1. 13.  
 ot that God does not see and behold all the  
 ckedness done under the Sun, even that com-  
 tted in secret places; for he is Omniscient;  
 t the meaning is, he cannot behold sin so as to  
 prove it. And therefore those Magistrates that  
 untenance vice, they are not like God, not-  
 withstanding by Office they bear his Image.



Last of all, though Magistrates are little God upon earth, with respect to the people ; yet in regard of the great God , who is higher than the highest, they are but *Stewards*, and must be accountable for their *Stewardship*. However dignified among Men, yet they are Servants of the most high ; and have a great trust, as well as honourable, committed to their charge ; and God will one day call them to account concerning this trust committed to them. He will hereafter call on them in such language as that, *Luke 16. 2. Come, give account of thy Stewardship, for thou maist be no longer Steward.* The time of their *Stewardship* will come to an end, and they must be accountable for what they have done. And therefore if Magistrates, *Gallio*-like, are very indifferent in God's cause, have no heart to punish vice, but in this respect bear the Sword in vain ; they will be able to give but a sorry account unto their great Master at the general appearing on the great day. On which day, there will be no respect of persons with God. High and low, rich and poor must all appear at his bar, and pass under an impartial tryal. And therefore we find, that Kings and great men are brought in trembling, *Rev. 15, 16.* Because with God there is no difference of great or small, no respect had to any man's person, but all shall receive according to their works.

Whether then we consider the great end of the Magistrate's Office, to execute wrath on him that doth evil ; that solemn Oath they are laid under to do right and justice according to the Laws and Statutes of the Kingdom ; the nature of their Office, as they are God's Representatives ; or the high trust committed to their charge, for which



after they must be accountable: in all these respects it is sufficiently evident, that Magistrates are eminently concern'd in this duty, *to appear for God against Sin.*

(2.) *Ministers* are concern'd in this duty. It was the commendation of the *Angel* and Minister of the Church of *Ephesus*, that *he could not bear with them that were evil*, Rev. 2. 3. It is recorded to the ever-lasting praise of *Phinehas* in my Text, that *he was zealous for his God*. For Ministers to shew an indifferent spirit in God's cause; and to stand neutral, to stand by as unconcerned spectators, when others are busy in reforming-work, and do call on them to lend their assistance; it argues a *Laodicean* spirit, and God threatens to *spue* such Ministers *out of his mouth*, Rev. 3. 16.

Of all other persons, none should be more forward than Ministers in discountenancing vice, and appearing for God against sin. These, as well as magistrates, have special and peculiar ties and obligations.

They are *God's mouth* unto the people. So they are called, Jer. 15. 19. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.* God every where speaks against sin and sinners; and Ministers, who are the mouth of God, should speak as he doth. They should in their preaching, as well as in the exercise of Church-discipline, make a separation between the precious and the vile, the good and bad. They should instruct, rebuke, exhort with all authority. Of all others, Ministers should least of all *bear with those that do evil.*

Again, Ministers in Scripture are called *Ambassadors*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. *Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ*

*Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.* Ambassadors are a sort of Representatives; they represent the persons of those Princes that send them. And thus it is with Ministers; they sustain the person of God and Christ; they represent God and supply the place of Christ upon earth. And therefore Ministers especially should shew a zeal against sin: for if they be cold and indifferent in the matter, they will give occasion to others to think, that their Lord and Master is just such another as they are, one that makes no great account of sin; and so they will bring dishonour and reproach unto God and Christ, whose Representatives they are.

Once more, It is *the Ministers work to preach down sin.* Their very Office does oblige them to it. The main design of their Office is to reform sinners, and to turn them from the evil and errour of their ways; *to open mens eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God,* Acts 26. 18. And therefore for Ministers to shew a backwardness to discountenance sin, they contradict the very end of their Office and are not worthy of the name of Ministers.

(3.) It is the duty of all in general, of *Private Christians*, as well as Magistrates and Ministers, to shew themselves zealous for God against sin. 'Tis the duty of all that profess Christ to shew themselves *zealous of good works.* This is one end for which we were redeemed, *Tit. 2. 14.* And 'tis a good work to restrain sin in others, to give check to vice, according to our place, as we have opportunity.

Yea, *self-interest* does oblige to it, not only to gain from sin our selves, but not to suffer it

trouled in others. There is a pertinent place for this purpose, *Lev. 19. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.* This last clause variously translated, as you may see particularly in the margin of the Bible, where you find it thus, *that thou bear not sin for him.* And to this translation I find Expositors of great note incline. And the meaning of the words is this, *thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour,* (tell him of his fault, or shew thy dislike of it) *and shalt not bear sin for him,* or for his sake: *i. e.* thou shalt not make thyself guilty of his sin, as thou wilt assuredly do, if thou dost not perform thy duty in rebuking him for his sin. And so this clause is a weighty reason to enforce this precept of rebuking our Brother, that so we may not share in his guilt.

Furthermore, if we consider that *relation* that private Christians bear unto God, this likewise does oblige them to appear against sin. They stand related to God as *Children*, therefore they should resent the dishonour and injury that is offered to God their heavenly Father. An ingenious Child cannot but resent his Father's wrong. Touch the Father in his name or person, and at the same time you reflect injury upon the Son. Why, God is our *Father*; we call him so in our daily Prayers as Christ hath taught us, *Mat. 6. 9.* And God dishonoured by mens sins, their horrid oaths, their open prophaness, immorality and lewdness. therefore we have the disposition of Children, we cannot but appear in the station God has set us, for the vindication of God's honour, by endeavouring what we can to suppress sin.

Once more, private Christians do stand related

to God as *Servants*. They are not their own, are *bought with a price*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. therefore they should mind the interest of their Master. The property of *Servants* (saith *Aristotle*) is not to their own will and pleasure, they have given themselves unto another. *Servants* are not *suavis*, at their own dispose; they are subject to another, by whose command, and for whose profit they ought to act. Those therefore that profess they are the *Servants* of Christ, as do all that are called by the Christian name, they are, or ought to be devoted to his will; and should endeavour to promote their Masters interest, whose *Servants* they are; consequently they should appear against sin, and do what they can to stop the current stream of iniquity; for nothing is so opposite to Christ's interest as sin is.

Thus whether we consider the *command* of God who requires us in the general to be zealously affected; or our own *interest*, which obligeth us to give check to our Brother's wickedness, that we may not partake not of his guilt; or our relation to God considered as *Children*, whereby we are obliged to stand up for God's honour; or our relation to him considered as *Servants*, whose interest we ought to study and promote: in all these respects, and many more that might be named, it is the duty of private Christians, to stand up for God against sin.

And let this suffice for the Doctrinal part, a brief Application shall conclude this Discourse.

### APPLICATION.

The only improvement I shall make of it, shall be to press you to this duty; to exhort you all, in your respective places, to be zealous for God against sin.



And I know not how to direct you better to express this zeal, than in promoting the *Reformation Manners*, which is begun in some places of this Kingdom, and is recommended to all in general by Persons of the highest rank among us, not only the King's Proclamation, but divers of the Nobility and Reverend Clergy, Lords Temporal and Spiritual, who have publickly subscribed their approbation.

God (my Beloved) has done great things for this Nation. He has delivered us from our fears of Popery, and arbitrary Government; and hath set a most Christian Prince upon the Throne, who under God has been our Deliverer. When our Brethren, the Protestants in Neighbour Countries were under severe persecution, and are forced to buy the bread of their Souls with the peril of their lives; we have it to the full. Our Sanctuary doors are wide open; we have none to disturb, or make us afraid. In a word, we have a confluence of all sorts of blessings; so that no Nation under Heaven can scarce boast of greater privileges.

Now what does God expect from us, but that we should be a holy People, a *Reformed People*. Immorality and Prophaness have had a long reign of time, and have too much gone unpunished. He hath been, when he that was vertuous, when he that was truly and conscientiously pious made himself a prey. But (blessed be God) the scale is changed, the scene is altered. The Law now begins to run in a right channel. Liberty is granted unto tender Consciences. Prophaness and Impiety meet with publick check. Persons that are pious may be as holy as they will: and they have now also opportunity to give check to others in their sin.

How



How easy is it, were persons but diligent, drive swearing and sabbath-breaking, whoredom and drunkenness out of our Land; at least into secret and obscure places? Did all ranks and degrees of men lend a hand to it, nothing more easy.

*Ministers* would but incourage this work, and not only reprove sinners in the Pulpit, but exhort *Magistrates* and private Christians to their duty.

*private Christians* would rebuke their Neighbours as they ought to do; and in case of obstinacy give information unto the Magistrate: And if *Magistrates* would but perform their duty, in putting the Laws in execution against vice: This would strike terrour on our Debauchees, and make wickedness to flee before them. Sinners then would be afraid of the Magistrate's sword; though they do not fear the Almighty's terrors, and the judgment to come. In brief, it would not be easy to find in short time an open debauch'd or prophane person.

That I may excite all sorts to their duty, I shall apply my self distinctly to *Magistrates*, *Ministers* and private Christians.

First, I begin with the *Civil Magistrate*. Suffice it (Right Worshipful) this word of Exhortation *show your selves zealous in your publick stations for God against sin.*

Though you are our Rulers, yet we by Office are your Monitors; we are to instruct and admonish you in the Lord: therefore give me leave to put you in remembrance.

God hath raised you to a high post, he hath set you above the rest of Mankind; you are intrusted with great power; you have authority from him to execute wrath on them that do evil, as well

reward and encourage the vertuous. Shew them  
our zeal, in a diligent and faithful discharge of  
that *trust*, that *power* and *authority* that is commit-  
ted to you.

Magistrates, saith the Apostle, are *God's Mini-  
sters for good*, Rom. 13. 4. They are set up by him  
for the publick good; the good of Church and  
State.

With reference to the *State*, they are to pro-  
vide good Laws, (those of them that are intrusted  
with the Legislative power) for the preservation  
of the publick peace. They are to put (as there  
is occasion) those good Laws in execution, with-  
out having respect of persons. It is their place to  
hear Causes; to determine matters; to distribute  
Justice, rewards and punishments, as men deserve;  
and to take care of the publick weal.

This office of Magistracy is so useful and necessa-  
ry, that a Nation or State cannot long subsist with-  
out it. Were it not for Government, men would  
be Wolves to each other. They would bite and  
kill and devour one another. The strongest Arm,  
and longest Sword would carry all before it. We  
could not sit secure in our dwellings, nor be able  
to call what we have our own. As in the instance  
of *Micah*, and the sojourning *Levite*, of whom we  
read in the Book of *Judges*, (Ch. 18, 19.) which  
Tragicall Stories are both ushered in with this Pre-  
face, as the occasion of all, *In those days there was  
no King in Israel*. The Magistrates office is so use-  
ful to the State, for the preservation of peace and  
order, mens lives and properties; that 'tis better  
far to have a bad Magistrate, than none at all.  
Magistrates also are set up by God for the good  
of the Church. Hence they are called *nursing Fa-  
thers*

thers, Isa. 49. 23. *And Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and their Queens thy nursing Mothers.* The promise was made to the Church of the Gentiles and so belongs unto Gospel-times. Though they be not *Fathers*, to beget Souls to Christ, which is the Minister's work; yet they are to be *nursing Mothers*, to defend and protect those that are begotten by the ministry of the Word: The Magistrate's office, and the Minister's office are two distinct things; each acteth in a different sphere. As Ministers must not meddle with the Magistrate's Sword, considered as Ministers: so neither may Magistrates invade the Priest's office; they ought not to meddle with publick preaching, administration of Sacraments, Church-censures, and the like. King *Uzziah* stands on record, for caution to Magistrates in such cases, 2 *Chron.* 26. 18, 19.

Touching the *Extent* of the Magistrate's power in matters of Religion, I will not enter on a large dispute now. Thus much I take to be generally granted, that Magistrates are *Custodes utriusque Tabulæ*, Guardians of the first as well as second Table.

Tho' Magistrates may not force persons to receive that Communion, perhaps that which they themselves like best; or impose upon their Consciences in sinful or doubtful matters, the Conscience in such cases being subject to God only: yet they may hinder the publick exercise of an Idolatrous worship, and oblige persons to keep their conscience pure, and to worship God in some way or other. It stands upon record to *Josiah's* praise, that he brought down the *Idolatrous Priests*, and the worship of *Baal*, 2 *Kin.* 23. 4, 5. The like is mentioned of good *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* 31. 1. *Nehemiah* mentions it as a good deed, and for which he was

ifed whilst the world stands, that he restrained  
 sons from *polluting the Sabbath*, Neh. 13. 15, 16.  
 and it is recorded to *Asa's* commendation, that  
 obliged his Subjects on severe penalties, *to at-*  
*and the worship of the true God*, such as they could  
 except against, 2 Chron. 15. 13.

In a word, it is the Magistrate's place to *punish*  
*doers*, whether they openly violate the pre-  
 ts of the first, or of the second Table; for this  
 ne great end of their office, namely, *to execute*  
*th on them that do evil*, Ro. 13. 4. By *Evil-*  
 s I do not conceive that such are meant, who  
 not conform in every punctilio, to the Magi-  
 e's mind in matters of Religion. I know that  
 e have been dealt with in time past as evil-  
 rs, under pretence of breaking the Law, (the  
 of Man,) when it has been only to keep a  
 d Conscience toward God. The Magistrate's  
 er does not extend so far as this; to punish  
 for different apprehensions in matters of Re-  
 n, whilst they agree in the Essentials of it.  
 en all Faces are alike, then shall we be all of  
 mind, as to lesser matters. And as 'tis unrea-  
 ble for the Magistrate to punish any person,  
 use he is not of his size in body; so it is also  
 unreasonable to punish him merely for different  
 ehensions, in some disputable points, which  
 cannot help. Neither has such a course any  
 ude in it to make persons think otherwise.  
 ay indeed force outward compliance, and  
 men hypocrites; but what aptitude has it,  
 e or any one to take a stick and beat another,  
 by to make him of our mind? This is no fit  
 s to enlighten the mind; and if a man acts  
 st his persuasion, against his mind, he must



needs sin : for *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, Ro 14. 23. whilst therefore persons do agree in fundamentals, there ought to be liberty and toleration.

Though I do not plead for a boundless liberty for Atheists, Deists, Socinians, Idolaters, and such like ; who subvert the Gospel, and bring in damnable errors ; yet this to me is past dispute, that those, who maintain the Essentials of Religion, ought to have a liberty granted to them ; as (blessed be God) it is at this day.

Magistrates then are not now called to execute wrath on those persons who differ from them on some disputable points, wherein wise and good men cannot yet be agreed ; but on Atheists, Idolaters, prophane Swearers and Sabbath-breakers and such like. In old time, the *Idolater* (and the Atheist) was to be stoned, *Deut.* 17. 2, 5. The *Blasphemer* was put to death, *Lev.* 24. ult. So was the *Adulterer*, *Lev.* 20. 10. The *Fornicator* also had his punishment, *Deut.* 22. 29. And so had the *Drunkard*, *Deut.* 21. 20. Not to speak of the penalties for *Theft* and *Murder*.

All these vices do fall under the Magistrate's cognizance. The law of God is expressly against them, and so are the laws of our land too. We have excellent laws, not only against theft and murder, but sabbath-breaking, prophane swearing, drunkenness and whoredom : though it were to be wished, that a more severe penalty, than is now in force, was annexed to the last of those mentioned crimes.

In the mean time, it is the Magistrate's duty to put in execution those good Laws that we have against those immoral and prophane Sinners ; and I know not wherein they can better shew the

al for God. A *Gallio's* spirit, in this Cause of God, wherein his honour is so nearly concerned, very unbecoming a good Magistrate. What will signify to have good Laws, if so be there is no execution of them? Did Magistrates according to that trust and power committed to them, execute wrath on evil-doers; this would be to their commendation; hereby they would fill up that part of their office which obligeth them to it, and would discover to all the world, if they proceed with life and vigour, that they are *zealous for their God*.

I would humbly propose it to their consideration, whether they are as zealous in punishing profane debauched sinners, who break both the Laws of God and Man; as formerly they were in punishing Dissenters? In this last case, the matter is disputable, whether such persons ought to be punished? It is a question, whether the supreme Magistrate has power to impose on any man's Conscience, in disputable matters, when persons cannot see the lawfulness of them? And 'tis a question, whether or no, inferiour Magistrates ought to execute such Laws, notwithstanding their Oaths? or if it be sinful, Oaths must not be bonds of iniquity. Whereas the case before us is plain, there is no dispute, whether profligate sinners, who break God's law and Man's too, ought to be punished? And therefore I would humbly recommend this to the *Magistrate's zeal*; that he would now be as zealous in punishing these, as in time past he was the former; and not brow-beat those who endeavour to bring them to condign punishment.

*Blessed art thou O Land, when thy King is the*

*Son of Nobles, and thy Princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness, Eccl. 10. 17. When thy Magistrates are just and sober; do rule in God's fear, and discharge their duty, in executing wrath on evil doers, and in protecting them that do well !*

Secondly, I address my self to my *Reverend Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry*, Conformists and Nonconformists, for in this point, (the suppressing of vice) we are all agreed. Suffer (Right Reverend) this word of Admonition ; *Shew yourselves zealous for God against sin, in promoting and encouraging the work of Reformation.*

Be not offended, whilst I take upon me to be your Monitor; or rather Remembrancer. It is God's cause that I am engaged in; and I know that you, who are on God's side, will bear with me.

If such as we, whose work it is to reform Sinners, should not assist, when called on, to promote a National Reformation, we were e'ne a good lay down our Office. We shall by our practice declare to the world, that whatever outcries we make against sin when in the Pulpit, yet we are not willing to have sinners reformed.

Give me leave (my Brethren) to expostulate a little. What is it that should make us thus backward? Are not the vices we are called on to lend our assistance for the suppressing of, condemned by us all? Who can deny, but that swearing, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness and whoredom are crying iniquities, that deserve punishment? Yet who is there, of those that are so forward to prosecute their neighbours, for every neglect in point of a Ceremony, where the law will allow, that takes any notice of these profligate Sinners?

I speak not at random, but from experience. It has been the grief of my soul to see how difficult it is to engage some Ministers, to put to their assisting hand, in promoting this work of Reformation. I do not say, that all are so: God forbid! I should then fear it an awful prelude of some fore judgment.

To see persons all life in a Ceremony; but in God's cause to have no heart, in some of the substantial points of Religion to be as dead as a stone, what is it but the height of hypocrisie? Our Saviour himself has decided this case. He hath told us, there are weightier matters, and lesser matters; and he hath branded those for hypocrites, and has denounced a woe against them, who keep a bother about smaller matters, such as Ceremonies of Man's making, *mint, anise, cummin*; but neglect the weightier matters of the Law; *sobriety, righteousness, peace, charity; faith, judgment, mercy*. You know where it is written, *Mat. 23. 23.*

When we see some persons thus zealous about lesser matters, *Jehu-like*, driving on with a furious zeal; and at the same time to have no regard for God's honour; to be careless and indifferent, whether God's law, and the great things of it, be observed yea or no; it is a temptation to many to believe, that there is more than a Ceremony, that is the difference between the Church and the Meeting; and that a separation is in some sort necessary, to keep up the *power of Religion*.

I could heartily wish, that we could unite on one common bottom; and walk together where we are agreed, and particularly in suppressing vice and prophaness! now we have an opportunity for it, the supream Magistrate's countenance and good



It was the observation of our Blessed Lord, *that the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light*, Luke 16. 8. O, it not, ( my Reverend and dear Brethren ) he true of Ministers. Shall the men of the world, different Interests, unite their forces, to promote one common and general design? Yea, let me ask shall the Devils themselves, as I have shewn elsewhere, (see my late Treatise, *Man's Sinfulness and Misery by Nature*, p. 145.) unite and agree, to carry on one common Interest, against Christ and his Kingdom? And shall not Christians, shall not Ministers unite in opposing the Interest of Satan, by endeavouring the suppression of vice and prophaneſs. *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon*; let not the Papists hear of it, lest these uncircumcised Philistines rejoyce, who know that when we are thoroughly debauched, we are then fit for any Religion, and so may give them new hopes.

In the Name therefore of our great Master, let us lay by our lesser heats, and shew our selves *zealous for our God*, by promoting in our places, that National Reformation, that is begun in some parts.

I would hope (my Brethren) you need not motives or a spur; though I take this liberty to put you in remembrance.

Thirdly, a word briefly to *Private Christians* and so I have done. *Is it a duty very pleasing unto God, to shew our selves zealous for him?* Then put this duty into practice. It belongs to you as well as others. Shew your selves zealous for God against Sin, by promoting in your places the so much talkt of *Reformation of Manners*. More particularly,

(1.) *Reform your selves.* Begin at home. You will never be able to proceed with courage in re-  
 forming of others, whilst guilt lies at your own  
 door. It will be objected, first mend your selves;  
 heal your self. The Snuffers of the Sanctuary were  
 to be of pure gold, *Exod. 25. 38.* A Ceremony  
 (as one has lately noted) significative of this,  
 among other truths; that *they must be holy, and  
 blameable themselves, who take upon them to reprove  
 and reform others.*

(2.) As there is occasion, *Rebuke your neighbour.*  
 How plain is this duty, though little practised?  
*Lev. 19. 17. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Brother,  
 and not suffer sin upon him.* There is indeed  
 some prudence required in giving rebukes some-  
 times. It may be done verbally, or by withdraw-  
 ing our presence, or some testimony of dislike, as  
 prudence shall direct, according to the circumstance  
 of time, place and person.

(3.) Lastly, if after rebuke he continues obsti-  
 nate, and other ways will not reclaim him, give  
 information against him to the Magistrate, that so he  
 may be brought to condign punishment. What can  
 Magistrates, or Laws do, though never so good  
 if none will take it on them to give information?

I know, the Name of an *Informers* is become odious;  
 because the thing has been abused; which is  
 either good or evil, according to the matter and  
 cause of it. To inform against the godly, for man-  
 ner of duty, to expose them to the rage of Persecu-  
 tors, that is wicked. But to inform against the  
 wicked, upon the account of their sin, whereby  
 God is dishonoured, to bring them to condign  
 punishment

nishment; that is godly, and a Scripture-duty  
*Lev. 5. 1. Dent. 17. 4, 5.*

Perhaps you meet with some *trouble* and *reproach* by giving Informations, and by endeavouring to reform others. Well, be it so: Is it not our duty to *deny our selves* in some cases? Can we be Christians without self-denial? Pray see *Mat. 24. 16.*

Who knows, but you by your zeal, may keep off God's judgments from the land? Did not *Phinehas* turn away God's wrath from the Children of *Israel*? Is it not recorded for the encouragement of others? *Num. 25. 11.*

Remember, that it is the *Cause of God*. How zealous were the wicked in time past in persecuting the godly for matter of duty; in hunting them as Partridges on the Mountains, sparing no cost, time or pains? And shall their zeal, in a bad cause, wherein they did the Devil's works, outdo yours in the cause of God, wherein God's honour and glory is concerned?

Consider this, God takes notice of all that you do; for he is Omniscient. He sees your zeal, your labour of love, and all your trouble, and notes it down in his book. Your zeal to him is a well pleasing act of faith: you may learn this from the instance of my Text. God was so well pleased with *Phinehas* his zeal, that he bestowed on him an everlasting Priesthood; and not only so, but blest his Children for his sake. Behold, I give unto him my Covenant of Peace, and he shall have Perfect, and his seed after him. Who knows, but that you, by your zeal, may derive a blessing unto your posterity?

Besides, if with *Phinebas* your zeal be right, all be *imputed to you for righteousness*, as his *Gal. 106. 31.* And God hereafter will reward you for it; and will abundantly recompence your trouble. Therefore comfort your selves with these discouragements with these thoughts.

To conclude; If Magistrates, Ministers and private Christians would each do their duty, how themselves zealous for God against vice, hearty promoting of the present Reformation, were an easy thing to drive sin into corners, clear our Towns of whoremasters, drunkards, profane swearers and sabbath-breakers, and bring Religion and a shew of Godliness into vogue. 'Twould also be a means of lengthning out our present tranquillity, and of procuring us many blessings, as well as the averting impending judgments; which, in case this work of *reformation* be obstructed, will in all probability be poured down on us. Which God of his infinite mercy prevent !

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F I N I S.